

REMARKS

Preliminary to further examination on the merits, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1, 8, 12, 19, 23, and 24 being independent. Claims 1-5, 12-16, 23, and 24 are amended herein. Support for the claim amendments may be found, for example, in the specification at page 11, lines 3-18. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Applicant respectfully submits that the summary of the invention indicates the nature and substance of the invention, includes a statement of the object, and is commensurate with the invention as claimed.

Applicant notes with appreciation the acknowledgment of a claim to priority and receipt of a certified copy of the priority document.

Claims 1-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,659,664 ("Kaja") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,913,193 ("Huang"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 of the invention, as amended, recites a speech synthesis apparatus having a database for managing phonemic piece data, the apparatus including generating means for generating a first label in consideration of a phonemic context for a phonemic label as a search target; search means for searching the database for a phonemic piece data corresponding to the first label; re-search means for generating a second label by changing the phonemic context on the basis of the search result obtained by the search means, and re-searching the database for phonemic piece data corresponding to the second label; and

registration means for registering the search result obtained by the search means or the re-search means in a table in correspondence with the first or second label.

Independent Claims 12 and 23 recite a control method and a computer readable memory each having features that generally correspond to the features recited in Claim 1.

Claims, 1-5, 12-16, and 23 have been amended to further clarify that a first phoneme, a second phoneme, and a third phoneme of the invention do not correspond to a left phonemic context, center phoneme, and right phonemic context of a triphone.

For example, the "first phoneme" can correspond to a search target, the "second phoneme" can correspond to a triphone, and the "third phoneme" can correspond to a phoneme generated by changing a left or right phonemic context of the triphone. "First phoneme" has been amended to a phonemic label, "second phoneme" has been amended to a first label, and "third phoneme" has been amended to a second label. Therefore, according to the claimed invention, *a first label is generated in consideration of a phonemic context for a phonemic label as a search target.*

Applicant submits that Kaja fails to teach or suggest at least a first label generated in consideration of a phonemic context for a phonemic label as a search target. Kaja discloses that several single phonemes may be interconnected in polyphone speech synthesis. Triphones, for example, may be formed. However, Kaja does not teach or suggest forming any triphone *in consideration of a phonemic context for a phonemic label as a search target.*

Further, Applicant submits that Huang also fails to teach or suggest at least a first label generated in consideration of a phonemic context for a phonemic label as a search target,

and that therefore, Claims 1, 12, and 23 patentably distinguish the invention over Kaja and Huang, whether taken alone or in combination.

Independent Claim 8 recites a speech synthesis apparatus for performing speech synthesis by using phonemic piece data managed by a database, including storage means for storing a table for managing position information indicating a position of phonemic piece data in the database in correspondence with a phoneme obtained in consideration of a phonemic context made to correspond to the phonemic piece data; calculation means for acquiring phonemic context information of the phoneme as a synthesis target and fundamental frequencies corresponding thereto and calculating an average of the acquired fundamental frequencies; search means for searching a phoneme group corresponding to the phonemic context information from the table; acquisition means for acquiring, from the table, position information of the phonemic piece data corresponding to a predetermined phoneme of the phoneme group searched by the search means, on the basis of the average of fundamental frequencies calculated by the calculation means; and changing means for acquiring the phonemic piece data indicated by the position information, acquired by the acquisition means from the database, and changing a prosody of the acquired phonemic piece data.

Independent Claims 19 and 24 recite a control method and a computer readable memory each having features that generally correspond to the features recited in Claim 8.

Applicant earnestly believes that the claimed combination of features of Claims 8, 19, and 24, including the recited storage means (or storage step, or program code for a storage step), patentably distinguish the invention over Kaja and Huang, whether taken alone or in combination.


Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejection are respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are submitted to be allowable for the same reasons that the base claims from which they depend are allowable, and further due to the additional features that they recite. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in Washington, D.C. by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to the address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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